

Mr. Griffin, my name is Jessica Kloss and I am a senior at Beebe High School. I am planning to be a political science major next year, and I am simply fascinated by our political system. I have never had the opportunity to visit Washington, although it is at the top of my bucket list.

I have been interested in politics since I was very young. My mother always let me attend the polls with her, and let me help cast her vote. While many kids and teenagers know very little about our political system, I am always doing research and keeping up with current events. I registered to vote the very day I turned eighteen! While the majority of my peers were dredging through AP United States history last year, I was the nerd who was soaking up every last drop of the information that I could possibly get! I was voted Future President by my peers last year. I watch political news more than I do my homework, and I do a lot of homework. I paged for Senator Dismang at the Arkansas State Capital last year, and I was enthralled. It was a wonderful experience to see our government at work, and that was just at the state level. I attended Girls State last year and was voted Senator by my city and got to create a bill and present it to our senate (a bill which redirected a portion of the funds of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, I may add.) I love politics. I have dreamed of being a politician my whole life. Most people grow out of the "I want to be President" stage, but I never have. If anything, it has grown with age. Having the ability and power to decide on issues which affect the people I am representing, the people who have trusted me enough to place their confidence in me to represent them well, is something I have only dreamed about.

More than just a love of politics, our system of government and law intrigues me. We have the best government in the history of mankind. Flawed as it is, it seeks to protect every citizen within its borders and territories and allow for growth, development, change, and adaptation. Our government and economy allow us to pursue our hopes and dreams, whatever our background may be, and it does not discriminate. More than that, our founders entrusted us the right of freedom: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, the right to vote! Many, many citizens of other countries would give up so much to have any one of those rights, much less all of them. That is why I want to be a part of our government. I want to protect these rights that our founders undoubtedly entrusted us with. Our founders knew exactly what oppression felt like when the mother country Britain taxed them with no representation in their own parliament, and they didn't want that for us. That was exactly the type of government our founders wanted to protect us from. They sought to create a government "of the people, by the people, for the people", if I may quote the great President Lincoln. They created a government that would listen, represent, and trust its own citizens. My AP world history book hinted that America is the "Rome of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", but I find no validity in this statement. Rome was unable to create a government in any way comparable to ours. We have a brilliant system of checks and balances, which makes sure no branch is too strong or doesn't properly represent the people. The Roman government was prone to corruption and instability, and while we often get so caught up with seeing all that is wrong with our government and lawmakers today, we forget how truly remarkable our government is. We may very well disagree with our President and congress, but I personally wouldn't trade our brilliant system of government for anything. If we don't like a certain leader, we possess the ability to make a change. We are allowed the right to vote for whoever we think can best represent us! Four years or two years may seem like quite a long time to be stuck with a leader or representative we

are not fond of, but I will speak for the people who lived under Maximilien Robespierre's "Reign of Terror" or the Roman emperor Caligula, who was once quoted saying "Let them hate, so long as they fear", in saying that we are very lucky to have the form of government and leaders that we do. We can openly criticize our government and leaders without fear of punishment, and that is a right I am very glad to have. We are allowed opinions, free thought, and a voice in our government. That is why I would like to attend the State of the Union Address. I love my country and our system of government, and I would be beyond thrilled to see it at work before my eyes.